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XXVIII.
19.
ORATION,

ON THE DUTIES

IMPOSED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

DELIVERED BY APPOINTMENT OF THE TRUSTEES,

BEFORE THE

GWINNETT MANUAL LABOR SCHOOL INSTITUTE,

AT ITS ANNUAL EXAMINATION,

July 26th, 1838.

etc.
BY D. C. CAMPBELL.

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ORATION.

'The age in which we live has been truly termed the age of improvement. In all the various departments of life, we are presented with abundant evidence, that the dormant energies, intellectual and moral, of our race, have been aroused, and are now exerting their influence with a power and efficiency unprecedented in the history of the world. The present century has witnessed, in the physical sciences and mechanic arts, improvements and discoveries as astounding in their character as they are important in their practical results. The resources of life have been multiplied and its facilities increased, to an extent almost beyond the powers of computation. The laws of nature have been investigated and demonstrated with a certainty, which, while it has demolished many of the cherished theories of times gone by, has thrown wide open the doors of her abundant store-house, exposed to man's inspection her ample treasures, and invited him to appropriate to himself whatever can gratify his curiosity or minister to his wants. Her recesses have been explored, and, illumined by the torch which truth has supplied, have furnished new incentives to further investigation, new themes of wonder and admiration, and new proofs, not only of the wisdom, power and beneficence of her Architect, but that it was his design in constituting man the lord of creation, that all her works should be subservient to his use and tributary to his happiness.

When, so well as at the present period, has the character of the human intellect, its powers and susceptibilities, been understood? When have existed so many aids for its discipline and its achievements? When has its compass been more wide, its efforts more bold, or its triumphs more glorious? Never, so well as now, has the precept, founded in truth and dictated by wisdom, been so scrupulously regarded,

"The proper study of mankind is man."

On the political world the spirit of the age has also made its impression. Wherever civilization exists, man is inquiring into his relations with his fellow-man, into the nature and extent of his duties and rights; is bursting the fetters which ignorance and despotism had fastened around him, and is aspiring after, and advancing

to, freedom and independence in thought and in action. He is learning that civil society can exist, that nations can be sustained and flourish without the aid of the sword, and that that government is most wise and just and best administered, which governs least, and where the sceptre is swayed by those who are the subjects of its power. The despot into whose dark domain a single ray of light has penetrated, has been made to feel that the foundations of his throne are tottering beneath him, and that there is a spirit of political regeneration abroad, which in its onward march will rebuke his arrogance and contemn his power. The operations of the same cause may be seen in all the limited monarchies of Europe, in the continual restrictions of regal prerogative exacted and conceded, and in the perpetual and successful contests waged by the people and their rulers against principles and customs, constitutions and laws, which had hitherto been regarded, if not the insignia of their glory, the necessary infringements of civil liberty constituting the bulwarks of their safety.

If we take a survey of the religious world, there too we perceive unwonted exhibitions of zeal, activity and enterprize. Christendom has awoke from the slumber of centuries. She, too, has made discoveries, not indeed novel, yet important discoveries. She has disregarded the voice of tradition, thrown off the rubbish which the lethargy of former times had accumulated, and has conned anew and appropriated to herself, in all their original simplicity and directness, the lessons prescribed by her Founder for her government. She has learned that his injunction, which for ages had been a dead letter upon the statute-book of her faith, and her hopes, "Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel," was addressed to her. She has resolved upon obedience, has buckled on her armor and arisen in her strength to repair the desolations that exist every where around her. She has entered upon a holy crusade against the powers of the Prince of darkness. Already have her missionaries gone forth, and on lands where Christian voice before was never heard, has she planted the standard of the Cross, and proclaimed the tidings first chanted by angels on the plains of Bethlehem, "peace on earth and good will to man." Already before her potent influence has the crescent began to wane, temples of idolatry have crumbled into ruins, the car of Juggernaut has ceased to find victims for its immolation, the funeral pyre emits a more unsteady blaze, and the Ganges, long sanctified by ignorance and superstition, has lost some of its crimson dye. Already have we seen, in some of the islands of the sea, an almost literal fulfilment of the prophetic annunciation, "a nation shall be born in a day." Who is there, as he looks down the vista of ages past, and contemplates the scene presented to his view, the whole family of man, with here and there an exception, enveloped in intellectual and moral darkness, the powers of his mind either laying dormant or spending its energies in wars and conquests, in objects and pursuits calculated only for the gratification of the baser passions of his nature, does not feel his bosom swell with emotion at the prospect that is opening before him? Who is there that does not rejoice that a new

era has dawned upon our world, and fondly cherish the hope that the beams of light which are now gleaming across the horizon, will prove the harbinger of a glorious day—a day whose meridian splendor will exhibit man, every where, standing forth in the full dignity of his nature, worthy the exalted station which he holds in the scale of existence; diffusing light and life and happiness around him, and travelling with unerring step the path that leads to a blessed immortality? The most superficial observer cannot but perceive in the aspect of the times, in the changes already effected, and in the revolutions in progress, a state of things which hitherto has never existed;—one pregnant with consequences, and which must inevitably tell with pre-eminent effect for weal or for woe on the coming destinies of our race. The future, happily, is involved in a mystery impenetrable to human ken; but that its developments essentially depend upon the impulse and direction that shall be given to the spirit which imparts life and vigor to the times in which we live, is as certain as that any definite effect must be preceded by a cause adequate to its production. The age, then, with its privileges, its enjoyments and its hopes, brings with it its obligations. What, therefore, are the duties imposed by the spirit of the age, cannot but constitute an important inquiry, and an appropriate theme to the occasion which has called us together.

It has been imagined by some, that the impetus which is now communicated to mind will be sustained and invigorated by the advantages resulting from its operations; that every step in its progress constitutes an incentive to renewed effort, and that consequently there is no reason to apprehend that its energies will be relaxed; and least of all, that it will relapse into the torpor from which it has been aroused, and involve our whole race in the intellectual and moral darkness which for so large a portion of its history has enshrouded it. The past, however, admonishes us, that this opinion, if it have any foundation in truth, is not to be entertained without caution and reserve. Egypt was once the seat of learning and refinement. Her scholars were adepts in the sciences and in the arts; she had attained great proficiency. But short was the period of their existence, and as short the period of her renown. She lies now only in her pyramids. The light she enkindled was succeeded by a darkness so profound that subsequent ages have been unable to penetrate it and decypher the epitaphs she had inscribed upon the monuments of her greatness. In Palestine some glimmerings of an intellectual day were perceptible in her early history, but they were ephemeral; they passed away like the morning cloud, and were succeeded by a night of moral gloom. Look, too, at Greece and Rome. There were laid in the arts, in literature and in science, broad and deep, the foundations upon which was reared a noble superstructure. There were opened the fountains, whose fertilizing strains in all succeeding time, have pervaded every corner of the globe where civilization has opened a channel for their passage. There, even at this distant day, are we compelled to repair for our models of all that is refined in taste, rich in poetry, commanding in eloquence, and sublime in philosophy. Who is there

that has not been enchanted by their bards, and who is there that has surpassed them in magnificence of conception, in appropriateness of imagery, or in the sweetness and melody of their strains?—Who is there that has not derived pleasure and instruction from the recorded efforts of their orators; and who is there that has rivalled them in the power they exerted, measured by the effects they produced? Who is there, read in the philosophy taught in their schools, that has not learned an important practical lesson in the order, industry and perseverance that characterized their investigations; while he has been overwhelmed with astonishment at the **grandeur** of the results and the arguments advanced to sustain them? Yet Greece and Rome fell from their palmy stations.—Mind lost its power, its equipoise and its incentives to action; its achievements were disregarded and contemned; its proudest memorials were trampled in the dust; and for many, which escaped the ruthless hands of the destroyer and have descended to us, are we indebted to the volcanic eruptions under which they were entombed. Darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people.

These are some of the beacon lights which history exposes to our view, to illumine our path, to warn and to guide us. Will it be said that in the instances referred to, the causes which then operated have ceased to exist? It is indeed true, that where intelligence and refinement now prevail, we need not fear the conquests of the barbarian, or incursions from the Goth and the Vandal: it is nevertheless true, that the great efficient cause which then was followed by such fearful results, still exists in all its power. Human nature now, is the same as it was then. Then its innate depravity, its predisposition to yield to the sway of its animal propensities, and its actual submission to their dominion, generated the effeminacy which rendered its victims the easy prey of the spoiler. It is a humiliating truth, and, disguise it as we may, we cannot evade its force, that here it is, in this condition of our nature, in this abiding memento and consequence of transgression, is constituted the centripetal power which has hitherto driven man, intellectual man, from the orbit in which he should revolve, and which will, unless its influence be counteracted by a power adequate to repel it, continue to be felt, and sink him lower and lower till he attain the level with the brute creation. It is vain, therefore, it is preposterous, to expect that our race will be improved, that it will ever sustain its present moral elevation by remaining in a state of quiescence and inactivity. It is equally vain and preposterous to imagine, that any efforts for its improvement, any plans for its renovation, moral, social or religious, will prove otherwise than abortive, which do not recognize this prominent trait in its character, this universal law of its nature, and provide for its removal or modification. The centrifugal power must be created, and be applied and sustained with untiring zeal, unyielding perseverance and concentrated energy.

But in considering the duties incumbent upon the age, while we are compelled to regard the monitions of history and the wayward propensities of human nature, there are other circumstances of a

peculiar character, signs of the times that must not be overlooked. It is a trite maxim, and as applicable in the moral as in the physical world, that "all is not gold that glitters." If this be an age of improvement, it is no less one of innovation, change and experiment. Although in all the departments of life, improvements, real and substantial, without number, have taken place, yet there is unquestionably manifested a disposition, without discrimination or distinction, to forsake the beaten paths over which our fathers travelled, and to condemn as antiquated and unworthy of notice, all that is not the product of the brains of the modern reformer, been remodelled by his plastic hands, or received the seal of his approval. Hence it is that institutions, usages and practices based upon the immutable principles of truth and justice, have been assailed, and those of recent origin trumpeted abroad as the only conservators of human happiness. Hence it is, that we see, every where around us, an eagerness to adopt new theories and new rules of conduct, and to esteem every successive change a decided improvement upon that which preceded it. For example, is a child to be educated, he must be taught from the latest books and according to the latest plans. By the time he can lisp his name, he must be imprisoned within the walls of an infant school, and there learned to repeat; and lest the task should weary, to sing a great variety of sounds. These sounds are intended to convey ideas, to impress the heart and instruct the understanding. Like the parrot he learns them, and to the same extent feels and understands them. Here, then, while standing at the base of the rugged hill of science, the first lesson he receives is one which not only will not aid him in the ascent, but one which, as it destroys the germs of mental effort, induces him to expect others to think for him, and to believe that education consists merely in the transfer, through the agency of memory, of the thought of others to his own mind; will retard his progress, and through life, unless remedied by subsequent culture, prove a perpetual clog to all his intellectual exertions. This is not an isolated case. According to the systems of the reformer, the hill of science has now lost all its ruggedness, and is to be ascended by a rail-way of his own construction, and by a locomotive power of his own invention. How many have travelled it, and how few have attained the summit, is evinced by the character of the scientific and literary efforts that have been recently produced, and for which a demand has been occasioned. Who now write as Bacon, Locke and Newton wrote? And who would read their labors if they did? The press teems with its productions; the world is filled with books, yet with few or none of recent origin which are the results of deep research, of profound meditation. The novel, the review, the magazine and the news-paper, constitute the standard literature of this enlightened nineteenth century.

But let us trace the footsteps of this spirit of innovation upon another field. In our days a singular spectacle is exhibited. The lawless infidel and the religious fanatic have embraced each other, and for the purpose of effecting their fancied schemes for the amelioration of society, have combined their artillery, and levelled it

against institutions which lay at the foundations of all human improvement, which have stood the test of ages, recognized by the laws of God and ordained by those of man. They have boldly proclaimed that all laws regulating the right of property are violations of the principles of natural justice ; that the laws of marriage are incompatible with the paramount law of equal and universal love ; that the right of the parent to control his child, and all governments, social, civil and ecclesiastical, are usurpations of power, founded in error and injustice, and should be subverted and destroyed ! How many are the homilies they are daily reading from the fruitful text, "all men are by nature free and equal."— Perverting the sentiment intended to be conveyed by those who originated the expression, and by an impious fraud attempting to adduce the names of the sainted fathers of our country as allies in their unholy warfare, they have broached this impious doctrine in its full and literal import, and advocated it with fanatic zeal in the face of the Mosaic economy which provided for an institution, which it had the unquestionable right abolish ; in the face of the precepts and practices of the Founder of our religion, and of the constitutions of the churches organized and established by his apostles, and in full view of all the Providences of God, "in whose unsearchable wisdom one man is born in a manger and another on a throne, one with the turban of Mohammed and another with the waters of baptism on his brow, one on the banks of the Ganges, and another by the rivers of Israel," and in full view of all the inequalities, mental and moral, and the conditions and destinies of men ordained and appointed of Heaven. If their doctrine be true, then are the inferences deduced from it legitimate truths ; then, may it well be asked, where is the authority for any government, and where the duty of any obedience ; then is there propriety in the question, what right had those who have gone before us, to divide the earth into portions, giving to one more, to another less, and nothing to a third, when all are equally entitled ? If their doctrine be true, then has revelation dazzled but to bewilder, and the Deity from whom it emanated and by whose authority the inequalities of birth and circumstance are created and controlled, should be dethroned, and the goddess of reason elevated to the throne of the universe.

Other reformers, taught in the same school, and whose zeal for the welfare of the human family has been enkindled at the same altars, have avowed their hostility to the Christian ministry, denounced it as a monopoly and an incubus upon the body politic ; have condemned, as inconsistent with the obligations of temperance, the use of the product of the vine as ordained by the Saviour in the sacrament commemorative of his death, and have made the important discovery that war, under any and all circumstances, is positive sin. The age has been prolific of extravagances like these ; but let us pass from the consideration of these cherished delusions, exhibiting in such bold relief the arrogance and the impotence of human reason, all originating in a depraved heart and a perverted understanding, and stimulated by a morbid conscience and "a

"vain ambition that hath overleaped itself," to the contemplation of other signs of the times which equally demand review and correction.

The most enthusiastic admirer of the spirit of the age cannot but acknowledge that its tendency and efforts have been rather to supply the wants of the physical than of the intellectual and moral world. Under its auspices the resources of life have been multiplied and its facilities increased to an almost indefinite extent.—Human labor has been saved, space annihilated, and the extremes of the world brought into contact with each other. The road to fortune has been unbarred, and fields illimitable of speculation thrown open. The consequence of this state of things is, that wealth has become the one thing needful, the great object of desire and pursuit, and money-making and money-hoarding the characteristic feature of the age. What should be deplored is, that while so much has been done to relieve the wants and gratify the desires of the physical man, so little comparatively has been effected to advance his intellectual and moral welfare. In the scramble after wealth, mind, immortal mind, the developement of its powers and its eternal destinies, if not overlooked, has at least lost its prominence. Who will contend that the vast majority of the improvements and discoveries, useful and important as they are, have any tendency to promote the happiness of man considered as an intellectual and moral being? What influence in this regard has been exerted by rail-roads with all their advantages; or what can be exerted by the stupendous powers of steam applied to the practical pursuits of life; aided, too, by all the anticipated results from the discoveries in electro-magnetism? Their moral power is no greater than that exerted by the splendid college edifice which the professor never enters, or by the beautiful temple dedicated to the Most High, where the ministrations of his word are never attended.

But once more. There is another consideration, which in this examination of the aspect of the times, must not be overlooked.—Paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that the improvements of society are themselves instrumental of their own destruction. One of the effects of an elevated state of civilization, is, the relaxation of energy in individual character. Where society exists in a state of nature or of partial mental illumination, every man depends upon himself for the maintenance of his rights. He who, by his cunning, his courage, his physical strength or his superior knowledge, excels his associates, commands their respect, and is immediately elevated to power and consequence. Certain distinction ensues success, and success is comparatively easy, because the goal to be attained is not far distant, and the competitors are few. The trials and struggles incident to this state of existence, generate that heroism which prompts to deeds of noble daring, an ingredient of character without which none can become really great or eminently distinguished. Motives abound on every side to arouse, to stimulate and to urge on to action. But in society, where intelligence and refinement generally prevail, these incentives do not exist. Individual consequence is lost in the crowd. Here con-

ventional arrangements, enlightened public opinion and mildness of manners, for the most part secure individual rights; and where these fail, the omnipotence of law supplies the deficiency. Here none but he who is pre-eminently endowed, the genius that disdains to walk where others have travelled, and whose appearances, like angels' visits, are few and far between, can ever expect to rise superior to those around him, and be crowned with laurels of victory. Here, then, where the inducements to exertion are to a great extent removed, may reasonably be expected that state of things which exists in the refined circles of society throughout the world, a mental ennui—a moral effeminacy—an unwillingness to do or to suffer whatever may require a struggle or occasion pain—a disposition to shrink from all effort and to yield submissively as to inevitable fate, to the force of surrounding circumstances.

From the survey which has now been taken, we have learned the admonitions which the history of the past is calculated to afford; that in the constitution of our natures there is inherent a moral malady which is preying upon its vitals, and which, if not arrested, will blight its fairest hopes; that out of the spirit of the age, its important discoveries and valuable improvements, has arisen and gone forth another spirit—the spirit of innovation, which in its onward march and heedless career, has been felt in all the ramifications of society, perverting its principles, assailing its most endeared institutions, and menacing a dissolution of the very ligaments which hold it together. We have also learned, that in the advances of the age the intellectual and moral character of man has not been regarded with its merited prominence, and that at all times relaxation of energy in individual character is the result of an elevated state of civilization. We have also learned from this examination, that the present generation, with all the ability, the means and the incentives requisite for a still more extended developement of its intellectual resources and moral renovation, is beset by obstacles, surrounded by dangers and encompassed with difficulties. As the gallant and sturdy ship, driven by propitious gales on her destined course, may be foundered by the weakness of her own timbers, or wrecked amidst the rocks and the breakers that lay in her way, so may the improvements of the age fail in effecting their desired results; and our buoyant hopes, in relation to the future destinies of our race, be doomed to sink to rise no more. That these hopes may be realized and an issue so disastrous and so much to be deplored may be obviated, it is, then, indispensably necessary, that the spirit which now animates the world should be so guided, directed and controlled, as to tell most efficiently upon the happiness of generations that shall follow us. Here, then, is a duty, an imperative duty, from which none is exempt, and which it is presumed none will deny. How that duty shall be performed, is a question which now demands our attention. The object to be obtained by its performance, the prize to be secured, unquestionably is the acquisition of the greatest possible amount of human happiness. It is for this we have been sent into the world, for this we live, for this we labor. Those who succeed us will be subjects of the same law, and must

abide the same destiny. Numerous are the paths which by their respective votaries are supposed to lead to the goal, which all are attempting to attain, yet it is the dictate of common sense, of philosophy and of revelation, corroborated by every day's experience, that all will lead astray, that none will conduct to real, substantial and enduring felicity, except that which He who made us, and controls our ways, has marked out for us. It may be laid down as an axiom, that His will is our happiness. If, then, it can be ascertained what that will is, the problem is solved, our duty is determined. And can it be, that the great Creator, while he has ordained laws for all his other works, from the worlds on worlds that move in silent grandeur and perfect harmony in obedience to their high behests, to the veriest atom that floats in the sun-beam, has thrown man, for whom all things else were made, into the world, to be the sport of accident, without law, without rule, without any directory by which to secure his present bliss and eternal inheritance? Most assuredly not. His will is his creature's law, his rule his guide. This is abundantly made known. His word and his works alike declare it. They beautifully harmonize and teach the same eternal truths. The book of nature, read in the light which revelation throws upon it, constitutes an unerring index. Let us examine one of its pages, let us hold converse with ourselves. Why is it that these frail bodies are animated by a spark struck off from the Almighty's mind? Why is it that the intellect has been formed susceptible of endless improvement, increasing by its exercise and strengthening by its expansion, the fountain of warm desires, of ardent hopes, of longings after immortality, of eager curiosity to unravel the mysteries of its own existence, and the mysteries of nature by which it is surrounded? Why is it, that by its unaided efforts, it has been enabled to travel over the fields of science, and to present in the trophies of its achievements so many evidences of its prowess? Why is it that the beneficent Creator,

"not content
 "With every food of life to nourish man,
 "By kind allusions of the wondering sense,
 "Has made all nature's beauty to his eye
 "And music to his ear?"

Without the aid of imagination, or of taste, or even of the senses of sight and hearing, (except so far as may be necessary to distinguish external objects,) all the necessary purposes of life would have been answered. Such, however, is the nature of our intellectual mechanism, that these faculties, useless as they are in the pursuits of practical life, when improved, are sources of the most pure, exalted and refined enjoyment. Without them, man would be a moving statue, capable, indeed, of performing all the social and relative duties incumbent upon him, of learning and attaining the high destinies that await him, yet in the sources and extent of his requirements, removed but a small distance from the instinct which governs the brute creation. In this situation, to him the beauties of nature would exist in vain. His path through life would be plain and cheerless. The flowers that now surround it, would unheeded

ed breathe their fragrance. He would see nothing in nature's magnificence to call forth his admiration, or to elicit his praise. His breast would be insensible to the inspirations of the muses, and his ear deaf to the harmony of sounds. Now, does it accord with the economy of nature or with the wisdom of nature's God, that this splendid apparatus should be thus constituted, that Heaven should have lavished upon it the richest of her gifts—gifts which assimilate it to the Eternal Mind—without any design, any reference to their use, and the objects they were to accomplish? On the contrary, does not the character of the mind, its powers and susceptibilities, conclusively prove, that, if God be wise, they have been bestowed for wise purposes; if He be benevolent, for benevolent purposes; in short, do they not indicate His will, and that that will is, that upon their improvement depends our highest, most substantial and enduring bliss? Does any one doubt it? Let him, if he can, contrast the enjoyments of the man of refined intellect, with those of him whose motto is, "Eat, drink, and be merry." It is, indeed, comparing Hyperion to Satyr; the effulgence of the noon-day's sun, to the evanescent light of the glow worm. To the one, all nature is little else than one continued blank. To the other, it is full of life and beauty, exhibiting the wisdom, power, and munificence of its Author, and demanding for Him unceasing adoration, love, and praise—

"For him the Spring
 "Distils her dews, and from its silken gem
 "Its lucid leaves unfolds; for him the hand
 "Of Autumn, tinges every fertile branch
 "With blooming gold and blushes like the morn.
 "Each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings,
 "And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,
 "And lores unfehl attract him. Not a breeze
 "Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes
 "The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
 "From all the tenants of the warbling shade
 "Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
 "Fresh pleasure unreproved."

If, then, the character of the intellect indicate the path which Providence has marked out, there can be no doubt of the duty that devolves upon us. In that path we must walk, if we regard our own or the happiness of those that shall follow us. But while the way is plainly designated by every page of the book of nature, revelation beams upon its full effulgence. Here it is, that life and immortality are brought to light. Here it is, that man learns the value of mind; that it is this, and this alone, which constitutes his being. Here it is, that he is permitted to penetrate the darkness of the grave, and to take a distant view of the illimitable world that lies beyond it. Here it is, that he learns that all the works of creation are manifestations of the Deity, placed before him for his study, that from the one he may be induced to revere, adore, and love the other. Here it is, that he learns that the service of his Maker is the object and end of his being, and that it is a service which is perfect freedom—"all of whose ways are ways of pleasant-

ness, all of whose paths are paths of peace." And besides, where else than to the Bible can he go, to find an antidote for the poison which lurks in his veins; a power adequate to sustain and elevate the downward tendencies of his nature? Where else can he learn what estimate to place upon all the improvements of physical life, and their claims to prominence in his affections, over those things which regard the well-being of the soul? Where else can he find an infallible test of truth? Are new theories in ethics advanced, new principles proposed, new rules of conduct prescribed, here is a balance in which they can be weighed, a standard by which they can be measured. Where else can we find incentives sufficiently powerful to arouse the moral effeminacy incident to refined society? Here are presented motives appealing to hopes and fears, connected with a responsibility, as weighty as the power of God, and as lasting as eternity. If, then, the age perform its duty, its energies must be so directed as to call forth the greatest possible amount of intellectual power. Its aims must be high, its efforts unremitting. Its systems of instruction must be such, that the discovery of truth, and not simply the acquisition of the tenets of others, must be the objects of study; such, that good as well as great men, can be found by them. And throughout the whole course of education, the Bible must be a text-book. Its pages must be read with an unshrinking eye, its testimonies received and faithfully applied, and its precepts implicitly obeyed. It is education, thorough, systematic education, guided and governed by the pure principles of Christianity, and sanctified by its spirit—education, which regards man in his whole career, eternity as well as time, that constitutes the moral lever which can sustain all the improvements of the age. It is this which can break down all opposing barriers, arrest the progress of innovation, error and delusion. It is this and this alone, which can impart to the spirit of the times an impetus which may be felt by generations yet unborn, elevating our race, in happiness and moral excellence, to a position hitherto unknown, since the day that our great progenitors were banished from the retreats of Paradise. It is as vain to expect that religion can be disseminated, or even exhibit its real worth and attractiveness, without the aid of education, as that education, uncontrolled by the principles of religion, can exert any abiding influence upon the welfare of man. As they unitedly, constitute the pathway, prescribed by unerring wisdom, that conducts to life, to happiness, to Heaven, so does religious education constitute the great, paramount duty of the age. In this all other duties are centred. Let this be performed, zealously, perseveringly and faithfully performed, and our world will again assume the moral aspect of Eden.

It might perhaps be appropriate in this connexion, to point out some of the instrumentalities that should be used in the discharge of this duty, and to urge some of the motives prompting to their use; as well as to shew that our own country, with its free institutions, constitutes the most suitable theatre for their display the world has ever witnessed. But I will not do injustice to the courtesy already extended, by trespassing longer on your patient indulgence, and the

more especially as those who I have the honor to address are the patrons and friends of an Institution based upon the principles which have now been advocated.

In conclusion, then, permit me to say, you have before you an ample field for usefulness; one which, if properly cultivated, must yield an abundant harvest. It is one upon which all may enter and unite their labors. Here the philanthropist can find ample scope for his benevolence, and the fruition of his most enlarged desires. Here the patriot, he who would preserve uninjured the legacy received from his sires, who would not extinguish the spirit of political reform which, under the influence of their example, has gone forth upon the world, who would not have sounded in his ears the funeral knell of popular liberty, can render his aid in urging on his country in her high career, and in securing the triumphs of freedom. Here, too, the Christian, who owes his name, his happiness and his hopes to love and benevolence disinterested, and whose duty and privilege and joy it is to extend the triumphs of the cross, can find an object worthy of his prayers, his alms, his efforts. Foster, then, your institution with unwearied diligence; adhere to the principles on which it was founded; extend the sphere of its usefulness. The age demands it, posterity demands it, your country and your God demand it. Let your motto be onward! onward! We live in a day when the influence of every man should be known and felt; when it is both pusillanimous and criminal to belong to that class

"That last, but never live,
"Who much receive, but nothing give,
"Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
"Creation's blot, creation's blank."

We cannot live for ourselves. Is there an individual that indulges a sentiment so unhallowed, so preposterous, a sentiment that would sap the foundation of all human improvement, and render the Heaven-born virtue, benevolence, an empty name? We constitute an important link in creation's chain, and as each is dependent upon the Author of all, so are we mutually dependent upon each other. We live for those who are around us, for those who are to succeed us; we live for our country and for our God. And for our encouragement, let it be deeply engraven upon our hearts, that fidelity in the performance of these various relative duties, will secure to us through life the plaudits of an approving conscience, in death the consolation arising from the reflection that we have not lived in vain, and that through the countless ages of eternity we shall be ever learning; that in having lived for others we did but live for ourselves.





